

Robert Burrows made Bayonne, NJ, his home for the last 50 years. He was instrumental in shaping the City's government, making his mark after serving as Bayonne's First Ward Councilman from 1994 to 1998. Mr. Burrows also served as Commissioner of the Bayonne Board of Adjustment, later becoming vice chairman.

Robert Burrows helped shape the future of the City of Bayonne as a citizen-appointed Member of the Hudson/Bergen Bayonne Light Rail Advisory Committee. In this capacity, he led Bayonne in becoming the first stop of the historic light rail system that has brought expansion and economic development to the region. Mr. Burrows also served as trustee of the Board of Education during the construction of the Midtown Community School.

Throughout his life, Mr. Burrows was an active member of the community. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus, the Holy Name Society, St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish Council, the Bayonne Sicilian Club, and Irelands 32. Mr. Burrows also served on the Board of the Bayonne Community Museum and was First Chairman of the Bayonne Historic Preservation Commission. His love for public service was also demonstrated as a member of the New Frontier Democrats.

Born in Brooklyn, NY, Robert Burrows was a graduate of New York University. He was a dedicated employee of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for 42 years until his retirement as vice president of the Claims Division.

From 1998 to 2006, Mr. Burrows served as congressional aide to U.S. Senator ROBERT MENENDEZ, and I was proud to have him serve in my office until his retirement. I congratulate Bob and his family for his dedication to the constituents of the 13th congressional district and in particular, to the residents of Bayonne.

The outpouring of expressions of condolence to his wife Marie, his children and grandchildren are evidence that his commitment to helping others will be deeply missed. I join them in mourning the loss of a true gentleman, whose memory will live in the hearts of the many people he touched.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 19, 2007

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I regret that I was unavoidably absent yesterday afternoon, June 18, on very urgent business. Had I been present for the three votes which occurred yesterday evening, I would have voted "aye" on H.R. 2563, rollcall vote No. 499; I would have voted "aye" on H. Con. Res. 151, rollcall vote No. 500; I would have voted "aye" on H. Res. 233, rollcall vote No. 501.

INTRODUCTION OF 2007 MINE SAFETY PACKAGE

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 19, 2007

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, in the hope of keeping the health and safety needs of our

coal miners at the forefront of our Nation's conscience, I am pleased to join my colleagues, the Chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, GEORGE MILLER, and ALAN MOLLOHAN from West Virginia in sponsoring a new legislative package on mine safety.

The mine tragedies of last year are the result of a government and a Nation that let down its guard. That should never have happened.

Nevertheless, the Congress responded quickly and appropriately with the passage of the MINER Act, which I proudly supported. Today, the Congress continues responding with the introduction of the Supplemental Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2007 (S-MINER).

This bill would ban the use of belt air to ventilate the working face of a mine—a flaw that contributed to the fatal fire at the Aracoma mine in my district. I have long opposed this practice, and I am glad to support the ban contained in this bill.

The bill requires improvements to air quality monitoring to guard against black lung disease, better safety examinations, and improved construction and monitoring of seals—all things that could have helped to save some of the 47 lives lost in the coalfields in 2006.

Also, importantly to my State, S-MINER calls for the installation of refuge chambers and helps to coordinate State and Federal deadlines and safety mandates. In West Virginia, operators are facing those looming requirements. A Federal requirement for chambers would undoubtedly save lives. It would, as well, help to reduce their cost and increase their availability, ensuring that more of our miners have access to refuges in life-threatening emergencies.

The legislative package contains concepts and provisions that have been part of mine safety discussions for years, if not decades. The elements contained within should not come as a surprise to anyone who has been within shouting distance of the coalfields in the last several months.

I welcome the discussion and the debate sure to come concerning this legislation. As long as we are talking about mine safety—whether we agree or not—we are not ignoring it. And that is a critical improvement to the purposeful neglect of recent years.

Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague, GEORGE MILLER, for his attention to this vital issue and I thank him for his continuing work on behalf of our Nation's coal miners and their families.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM FEENEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 19, 2007

Mr. FEENEY. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 498, I inadvertently voted "no" on H.R. 2642, the appropriations bill for military construction and the Department of Veterans affairs. I intended to vote "yes". This is an important piece of legislation. H.R. 2642 will be the vehicle for appropriating the funds directed to the new VA hospital, authorized in the FY 07 appropriations process, that will be located in central Florida.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2642, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 15, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2642) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes:

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Chairman, we have a solemn responsibility to honor the promises we've made to our veterans. Boldly heeding the call to duty, brave men and women from across America have served with distinction in defense of our Nation. They have dedicated their lives to safeguarding the promise and potential of our country, and we have an obligation to repay their commitment.

The veterans of California's 6th District understand that our obligation to our service men and women does not end when they return home. The importance of providing our veterans with the benefits they need and deserve does not abate just because our troops are no longer serving in the field. Our support for troops is a lifelong commitment.

The substandard care, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and deplorable conditions exposed at Walter Reed Military Hospital underscore broken promises to our Nation's veterans. We cannot allow the Bush administration's failure to become the hallmark of our country's commitment to our veterans. Our veterans deserve much better.

The Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2008 is a resolute step toward fulfilling the promises to our veterans that the Republican-controlled Congress neglected during the past 12 years. This bill increases the VA's budget by \$6.7 billion above fiscal year 2007 funding levels, providing the greatest single increase in funding for veterans health care in the 77-year history of the VA and, for the first time, exceeding the budget requests of independent veterans service groups. Additionally, this legislation confronts the 400,000 claims backlog from veterans awaiting decisions on the status of their disability benefits by adding more than 1,100 new claims processors. By allocating critical funding to help repair veteran's health care facilities, establish eight new centers to care for veterans suffering from Traumatic Brain Injuries, and facilitate the transition from the Defense Department to the VA, this appropriations bill will go a long way toward fixing the problems that the Bush administration has allowed to fester.

The veterans' community needs our reinvestment in their health care and benefits system. Our service members have proved courage and patriotism, and it's our turn to prove that we can keep our promise to them. This Military Construction and Veterans' Affairs Appropriations bill shows that we can provide our veterans with medical care, benefits and social support in a timely manner. By passing this bill, we can start to repay them for the bravery they have shown.